

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A method for generating biomarkers specific for a known genus, species, or strain
2 of a bioorganic compound selected from the group consisting of filamentous fungi, yeasts,
3 molds, toxins of fungi, and pollen comprising:

4 (a) providing a sample comprising a known genus, species or strain of the bioorganic
5 compound;

6 (b) placing an aliquot of said sample into a mass spectrometer;

7 (c) subjecting the sample to an ion source to produce charged molecular ions;

8 (d) propelling the ions into a mass analyzer to obtain a mass spectra;

9 (e) repeating steps (a)-(d) with at least one other non-identical sample comprising the
10 same genus, species or strain of bioorganic compound;

11 (f) comparing the mass spectra obtained for each sample;

12 (g) identifying at least one peak on the spectra that is common to each sample; and

13 (h) assigning an m/z measurement of the peak as a genus, species, or strain specific
14 biomarker.

1 2. The method according to claim 1 wherein the mass spectrometer is selected from
2 the group consisting of linear or non-linear reflectron time-of-flight, single or multiple
3 quadrupole, single or multiple magnetic sector, fourier transform ion cyclotron resonance, ion
4 trap and combinations thereof.

1 3. The method according to claim 1 wherein the ion source is selected from the group
2 consisting of laser desorption, fast atom bombardment, plasma desorption, electrospray
3 ionization, or massive cluster impact.

1 4. The method according to claim 1 wherein the mass spectrometer is a time-of-flight
2 mass spectrometer.

1 5. The method according to claim 4 wherein matrix assisted laser desorption
2 ionization is used as the ion source.

- 1 6. The method according to claim 5 comprising the steps of:
- 2 (a) mixing a sample comprising a suspension of known genus, species or strain of the
- 3 bioorganic compound with a matrix solution to generate a sample mixture;
- 4 (b) placing the aliquot of said sample mixture on the probe tip of the time-of-flight
- 5 mass spectrometer and allowing it to dry;
- 6 (c) irradiating the dried aliquot with pulsed laser radiation to form charged molecular
- 7 ions;
- 8 (d) accelerating the charged molecular ions by an electric field toward a detector
- 9 through the flight tube of the time-of-flight mass spectrometer to obtain a mass spectra;
- 10 (e) averaging the mass spectra resulting from 10 to 500 laser pulses;
- 11 (f) repeating steps (a)-(e) with at least one other, nonidentical bioorganic compound
- 12 comprising a suspension of the same genus, species or strain;
- 13 (g) comparing the averaged mass spectra obtained for each bioorganic compound;
- 14 (h) identifying at least one peak that is common to each bioorganic compound; and
- 15 (i) assigning an m/z measurement of the peak as a genus, species, or strain specific
- 16 biomarker.
- 1 7. The method of claim 6 wherein the matrix solution comprises one or more organic
- 2 acids in an aqueous solvent solution.
- 1 8. The method of claim 7 wherein the organic acids are selected from the group
- 2 consisting of 3,5-dimethoxy-4-hydroxycinnamic acid, γ -cyano-4-hydroxycinnamic acid and
- 3 *trans*-4-hydroxy-3-methoxycinnamic acid.
- 1 9. The method of claim 7 wherein the aqueous solvent solution is an organic solvent
- 2 selected from the group consisting of nitrites, alcohols, ethers, water and mixtures thereof.
- 1 10. The method of claim 7 wherein the organic acids are selected from the group
- 2 consisting of 3,5-dimethoxy-4-hydroxycinnamic acid, γ -cyano-4-hydroxycinnamic acid and
- 3 *trans*-4-hydroxy-3-methoxycinnamic acid and the aqueous solvent solution is an organic
- 4 solvent selected from the group consisting of acetonitrile, alcohols, water and mixtures
- 5 thereof.

1 11. The method of claim 7 wherein the matrix solution further comprises aqueous
2 trifluoroacetic acid.

1 12. The method of claim 10 wherein the organic acid and organic solvent are added in
2 a ratio from about 70/30 (v/v) to about 30/70 (v/v).

1 13. The method of claim 6 wherein the pulsed laser radiation is provided by a 337nm
2 nitrogen laser.

1 14. The method of claim 6 wherein about 10 to about 100 spectra are averaged.

1 15. A method for determining the genus, species and/or strain of an unknown
2 bioorganic compound which comprises:

3 (a) generating a mass spectrum of the unknown bioorganic compound according to
4 steps (a)-(d) of claim 1; and

5 (b) comparing the mass spectrum of the unknown bioorganic compound to a plurality
6 of genus, species or strain specific biomarkers, said biomarkers being generated according to
7 claim 1.

1 16. A method for determining the genus, species and/or strain of an unknown
2 bioorganic compound which comprises:

3 (a) generating a mass spectrum of the unknown bioorganic compound according to
4 steps (a)-(e) of claim 6; and

5 (b) comparing the averaged mass spectrum of the unknown bioorganic compound to a
6 plurality of genus, species or strain specific biomarkers, said biomarkers being generated
7 according to claim 6.

1 17. The method of claim 16 wherein the matrix solution comprises one or more
2 organic acids in an aqueous solvent solution.

1 18. The method of claim 17 wherein the organic acids are selected from the group
2 consisting of 3,5-dimethoxy-4-hydroxycinnamic acid, γ -cyano-4-hydroxycinnamic acid and
3 *trans*-4-hydroxy-3-methoxycinnamic acid and the aqueous solvent solution is an organic
4 solvent selected from the group consisting of nitrites, alcohols, ethers, water and mixtures
5 thereof.

1 19. The method of claim 18 wherein the matrix solution further comprises aqueous
2 trifluoroacetic acid.

1 20. The method of claim 16 wherein the pulsed laser radiation is provided by a 337nm
2 nitrogen laser.

1 21. The method of claim 16 wherein about 10 to about 100 spectra are averaged.

1 22. A biomarker library for identifying the genus, species and/or strain of an unknown
2 bioorganic compound selected from the group consisting of filamentous fungi, yeasts, molds,
3 toxins of fungi, and pollen, the library comprising genus, species or strain specific biomarkers
4 for known bioorganic compounds generated by the method of claim 1.

1 23. A biomarker library for identifying the genus, species and/or strain of an unknown
2 bioorganic compound selected from the group consisting of filamentous fungi, yeasts, molds,
3 toxins of fungi, and pollen, the library comprising genus, species or strain specific biomarkers
4 for known bioorganic compounds generated by the method of claim 6.

1 24. The library of claim 22 wherein the genus, species and/or strain of fungi used is
2 selected from the group consisting of *Phycomycetes*, *Ascomycetes*, *Neurospora*, *Aspergillus*,
3 *Penicillium*, *Basidiomycetes*, *Deuteromycetes*, *Acremonium spp.*, *Alternaria spp.*, *Arthrinium*
4 *spp.*, *Aureobasidium spp.*, *Beauveria spp.*, *Bipolaris spp.*, *Borytis spp.*, *Chaetomium spp.*,
5 *Chrysonilia spp.*, *Cladosporium spp.*, *Cunninghamella spp.*, *Curvularia spp.*, *Drechslera*
6 *spp.*, *Emmonsia spp.*, *Epiccoccum spp.*, *Fusarium spp.*, *Humicola spp.*, *Microsporum spp.*,
7 *Mucor spp.*, *Myceliophthora spp.*, *Paecilomyces spp.*, *Pithomyces spp.*, *Rhizomucor spp.*,
8 *Rhizopus spp.*, *Scopulariopsis spp.*, *Thielavia spp.*, *Trichoderma spp.*, *Ulocladium spp.* and
9 *Verticillium spp.*

1 25. The library of claim 22 wherein the pollen used is selected from the group
2 consisting of *Sorghum spp.*, *Secale spp.*, *Poa spp.*, *Cynodon spp.*, *Dactylis spp.*, *Agrostis spp.*,
3 *Zea spp.*, *Ulmus spp.*, *Juglans spp.*, *Populus spp.*, *Juniperus spp.*, *Fraxinus spp.*, *Betula spp.*,
4 *Alnus spp.*, *Acer spp.*, *Kochia spp.*, *Iva spp.*, *Artemisia spp.*, and *Ambrosia spp.*